



**MINUTES OF THE
Edina Transportation Commission**
Thursday, March 16, 2006
Edina City Hall
4801 West 50th Street
Community Room

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Joni Kelly Bennett, Dean Dovolis, Jean White, Marie Thorpe, Warren Plante

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Marc Usem, Ellen Cerf, Les Wanninger, Geoff Workinger

STAFF PRESENT:

Steve Lillehaug, Sharon Allison

“Two Wheels To Town...”

At 6:00 p.m. the ETC did not have a quorum to start the meeting. They had a discussion with representatives from Two Wheels To Town... (TWTT). Lillehaug said TWTT is an advocacy group for bicycling in a *four* city area – Cities of Edina, Minneapolis, Bloomington and Richfield. Their mission is to gain support and funding to build trails to connect communities. They are seeking a resolution from the *four* cities to support their mission.

Mr. James Sorensen, owner of Penn Cycle, said TWTT has been around for the past 17 months. Mr. Sorensen said he heard the Mayor of Munster, Germany speak in October 2004 and in his speech he mentioned that 35% of all transport was done on bicycles. He thought this was fascinating, so he went to Munster and met with the Mayor to better understand how his City was able to do it and how it could be done here. His partner, Gary *Sjoquist*, a national bicycle advocate and employee of Quality Bicycle Products was instrumental in starting an organization that gives grants to communities for building bicycle trails. The Bikes Belongs to the Trails Association has provided approximately \$1m in grants to communities in conjunction with federal funding.

Mr. Sorensen said it is possible to do the same here in Minnesota as in Munster because both cities have similar climates. A similar US city is *Davis, CA*, where most people get around on bicycles and the school district does not bus students who live within 15 minutes of a school. They are seeking a resolution of support from each of the *four* cities as they pursue this (City of Richfield has already given their support) and offer help to each city in becoming bicycle-friendly. The mayor of Munster and the City Engineer who designed the trails will be attending the James L. Oberstar Forum on Transportation Policy and Technology on April 9-10, 2006, to give a presentation on how they were able to get 35% of the population on their bicycles.

“The Two Wheels to Town...” is hoping that the ETC will recommend a resolution to Council. Bennett asked if it would be possible to have staff analyze the information and get back to the ETC at the next meeting regarding where the City fits in terms of planning and budget with the Sept. 2006 (Bicycle Comprehensive Plan) and June 2007 (Construction) timeframe. This is okay with both gentlemen. Lillehaug said staff will evaluate the proposal but the City does not address bicycle routes specifically in the Comprehensive Plan other than referring to the Three

Rivers Park Trails and supporting their system in Edina. Other systems that the City has pursued are the CP Rail Trail but did not receive funding and currently, the Interlachen/Blake Trail.

A motion was made by White to defer TWTT to the next meeting with staff input. Seconded by Dovolis. *Motion carried.*

It should be noted that the above motion was made after a quorum was reached.

TWTT representatives will show a 20 minute clip on Munster, Germany, at the next meeting.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was officially called to order by chair Bennett at 6:25 p.m.

II. New Business

a. Traffic Study for Proposed Development at 5200 France Avenue, Brownstone on France

Traffic Study Findings of Fact:

The Transportation Commission shall consider the following four effects in the evaluation of traffic studies that are warranted by certain zoning, land-use, conditional use permits and final development plan applications prior to the application being submitted to the Planning Commission and Council for consideration:

- i) Does the development significantly affect the operation and congestion of the adjacent roadways or intersections and/or result in a traffic hazard?

Finding: It is not anticipated that the proposed development will negatively affect the adjacent roadways and intersections. Traffic is being redistributed due to internal site revisions; however, access points to City streets are not being modified. The Levels of Service for the adjacent intersections are anticipated to remain unchanged.

- ii) Does the development significantly affect pedestrian safety?

Finding: The development improves pedestrian safety by replacing curb-style sidewalks with boulevard-style sidewalks along France Avenue and constructing a new segment of sidewalk along West 52nd Street.

- iii) Does the development provide opportunities for enhanced transit usage, van pooling or car pooling?

Finding: The site will continue to have direct access to the transit system along France Avenue.

- iv) Does the development provide feasible opportunities to address an existing traffic issue or safety problem?

Finding: Development of the site does not limit future planning and opportunities for roadway improvements.

The developer is proposing to build a 20-unit condominium on land that is currently a church parking lot. Lillehaug said staff is recommending approval of the traffic study with one condition attached. The condition being for the developer to build a boulevard-style sidewalk along France Avenue and along 52nd Street. The developer stated that they were not planning to build the sidewalk because it was not in any of their design layout throughout their meetings with the City. They are also concerned about the impact on the mature trees along both streets. Additionally, the developer said as a past resident of Halifax, he recalls a petition being submitted to the City for sidewalk along Halifax and it was denied. Lillehaug said the sidewalk petition is still valid; it just hasn't been acted upon. Bennett said part of the ETC's charge is working on the interconnectedness of all trails/sidewalks where they exist and adding new ones when possible to make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists. Lillehaug reiterated staff's position to have boulevard-style sidewalks and that it can be done without impacting the trees.

The traffic study conducted by Alliant Engineering, Inc. indicates there would be a reduction in a.m. and p.m. peak traffic in and out of the area on 52nd Street, the proposed entrance/exit to the development. It is expected that school buses will continue to enter from 54th Street and is recommended that they exit on 54th Street also.

The church and school representative was asked about adequate parking in the future. He said they are giving up 277 stalls which leaves them with 300+ stalls which is more stalls than they need. They do not foresee any growth that would overwhelm the number of remaining stalls and if this should happen they would most likely open a new site. The school does not foresee an increase either because they are at or near capacity.

Dovolis motioned for approval of the project, but with a recommendation to Council that criteria be established that limit the church so they never exceed the remaining parking capacity that they have. This motion was amended by Thorpe to include acceptance of the traffic study, including condition number 1.

Dovolis motioned for acceptance of the traffic study subject to the following two conditions:

- 1. Complete site plan to be submitted including existing topography, existing sidewalk layout and proposed sidewalk layout. A boulevard style sidewalk shall be constructed along the south side of West 52nd Street and the west side of France Avenue. A proposed sidewalk plan shall be submitted for review and shall be designed to coincide and complement the existing sidewalk adjacent to France Avenue.**
- 2. Criterion shall be established to limit future growth of the church so they do not exceed the remaining parking capacity. Seconded by White.**

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Motion carried.

Resident Mark John, 5007 Arden Avenue, stated that he was disappointed that the Commission did not get into the details of the traffic study. He is concerned about increased traffic on the local streets as a result of the development because they're essentially going from a single residence to multi-use and the residents will be cutting through on the local streets unlike the way it is now with France being the primary route. Dovolis explained that he

motioned for approval because an original plan called for a denser development and the zoning rules would have allowed it so he felt this was a good compromise.

III. Old Business

a. West 70th Street Transportation and Land Use Study, Consultant Discussion

Lillehaug asked the ETC if they would prefer that staff go through the RFP process or select a consultant that they've worked with to conduct the West 70th Street Study. Lillehaug said a tremendous amount of time was spent putting together the NE Edina RFP and only two proposals were received, one of the two being the consultant that staff would have chosen. Dovolis said the RFP process is an arduous one and recommended that staff chose the consultant. Bennett said if the issues aren't similar to the NE Study she would be okay with staff choosing the consultant. Plante thought it would make sense to continue on with the consultant that is working on the NE Study. When to begin the study might be an issue because they are tied up with the NE Study. Bennett suggested they could identify the consultant and hold an open house to *notify* residents *that a study* is planned and find out from them what they see as problems. Resident Harold Babb said they already know what the problem is and it is a bad grid so they should direct the consultant to create a solution.

Lillehaug said he could put together the scope of the proposal and have the ETC evaluate it to make sure the scope is accurate. Bennett asked if he could have it ready for the next meeting. Lillehaug said he will try his best but the department is very busy with 2006 projects. He is also looking at creating the model for the Southdale area and it could possibly be the same consultant for both projects..

Plante asked why West 70th couldn't be combined with the France to York Study which is scheduled to begin very soon. Lillehaug said this study is for safety improvements and the timing is to take advantage of proposed redevelopments in the area.

IV. Handouts

a. Notice of Public Meeting, Proposed Highway 100 Interim Improvements, City of St. Louis Park

White said she missed the open house meeting and she is concerned with the width of the lanes and severity of accidents. Lillehaug said the mainline lane widths will narrow a little as they go under the bridge, but under the bridge is currently configured as three lanes. The standard lane width is 12 ft. and Mn/DOT is planning to narrow the lanes to 11 ft.

V. Approval of Minutes

a. February 16, 2006

The following change was made to page two, paragraph 4, "He stated that *in* certain situations 30 mph *might be* too fast,"

Motion made by Thorpe to approve the minutes with above changes. Seconded by Plante.

VI. Planning Commission Update (Commissioner Workinger)

No update.

VII. Open Discussion

Resident Diane *Plunkett-Latham*, speaking on behalf of some residents in the southwest quadrant of Edina is concerned with a brochure that is going around the neighborhood that says a new sports facility will be built on the site of the Golf Dome with opening scheduled for August 2006. The primary concerns are increased traffic, using park land for private development and destruction of the Oak Savannahs. *Plunkett-Latham* said this is in its infancy and a redevelopment plan has not been submitted to the City, however, the developers have met with the Park & Recreation Director, John Keprios, and a meeting is scheduled for March 21st between the Council, Park & Recreation and the developer.

Dovolis said he would prefer not to comment on this issue because it is only a rumor at this point.

VIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 20, 2006, 6-8:00 p.m. in the Community Room, City Hall.

Italic represents approved changes and/or corrections.